

# NOTHING FAILS LIKE SUCCESS IN RE SUCCESS



As a rule, the man who can do all things equally well is a very mediocre individual. Those who stand out before a groping world as beacon-lights were men of great faults and unequal performances. It is quite needless to add that they do not live on account of their faults or imperfections, but in spite of them.

¶ Henry David Thoreau's place in the common heart of humanity grows firmer and more secure as the seasons pass; and his life proves for us again the paradoxical fact, that the only men who really succeed are those who fail.

Thoreau's obscurity, his poverty, his lack of public recognition in life, either as a writer or lecturer, his rejection as a lover, his failure in business, and his early death, form a combination of calamities that make him as immortal as a martyr ✱ Especially



does an early death sanctify all and make the record complete, but the death of a naturalist while right at the height of his ability to see and enjoy—death from tuberculosis of a man who lived most of the time in open air—these things array us on the side of the man 'gainst unkind fate, and cement our sympathy and love.

Nature's care forever is for the species, and the individual is sacrificed without ruth that the race may live and progress. This dumb indifference of nature to the individual—this apparent contempt for the man—seems to prove that the individual is only a phenomenon. Man is merely a manifestation, a symptom, a symbol, and his quick passing proves that he isn't the thing. Nature does not care for him—she produces a million beings in order to get one who has thoughts—all are swept into the dustpan of oblivion but the one who thinks; he alone lives, embalmed in the memories of generations unborn. ¶ The Thoreau race is dead. In Sleepy Hollow Cemetery at Concord there



is a monument marking a row of mounds where a half-dozen Thoreaus rest. The inscriptions are all of one size, but the name of one Thoreau alone lives, and he lives because he had thoughts and expressed them for the people.

One of the most insistent errors ever put out was that statement of Rousseau, paraphrased in part by Thomas Jefferson, that all men are born free and equal. No man was ever born free, and no two are equal, and would not remain so an hour, even if Jove, through caprice, should make them so. If any of the tribe of Thoreau get into Elysium, it will be by tagging close to the only man among them who glorified his Maker by using his reason. Nothing should be claimed as truth that can not be demonstrated, but as a hypothesis (borrowed from Henry Thoreau), I give you this: Man is only the tool or vehicle—Mind alone is immortal—Thought is  
**THE THING.**